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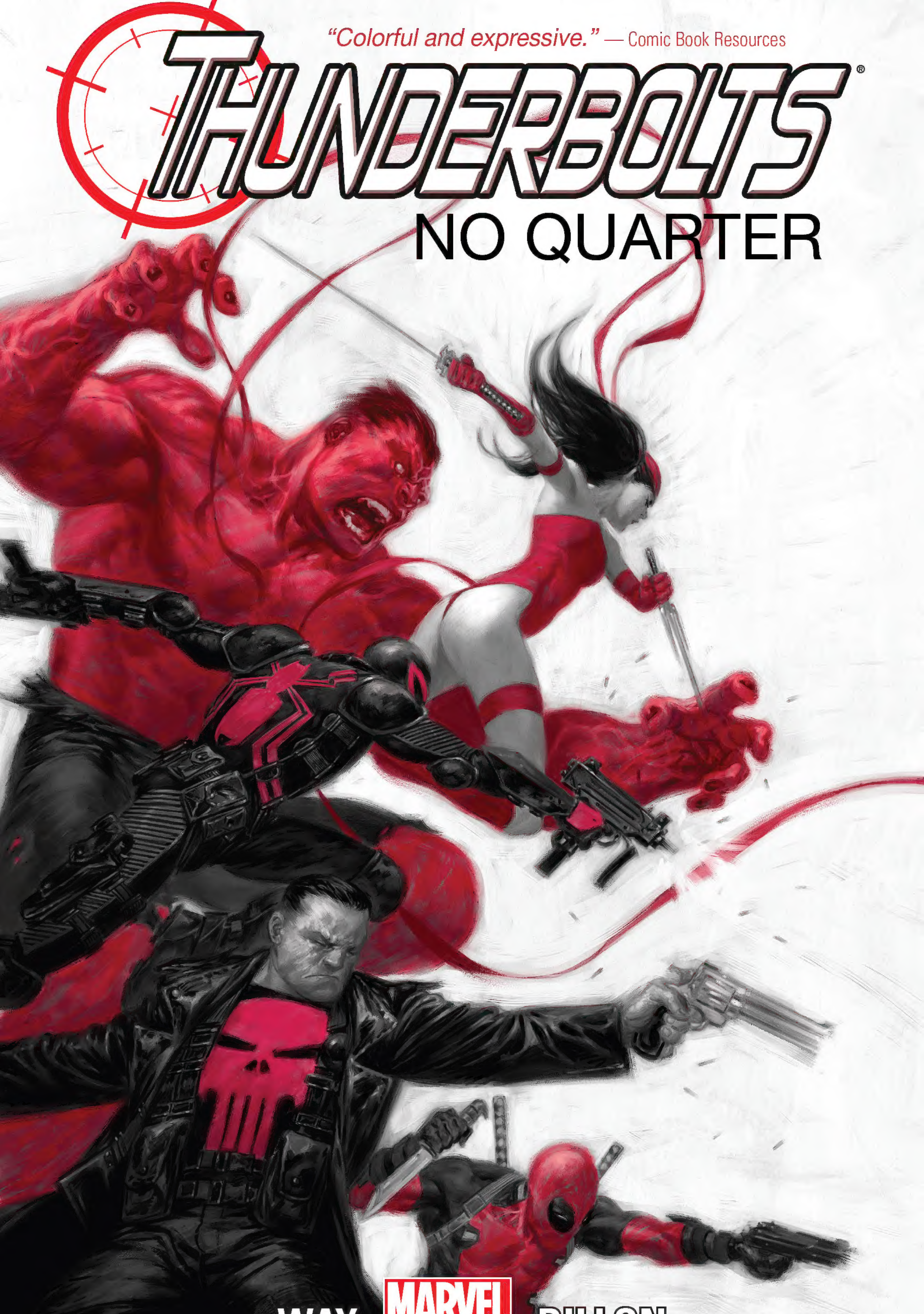


WAY

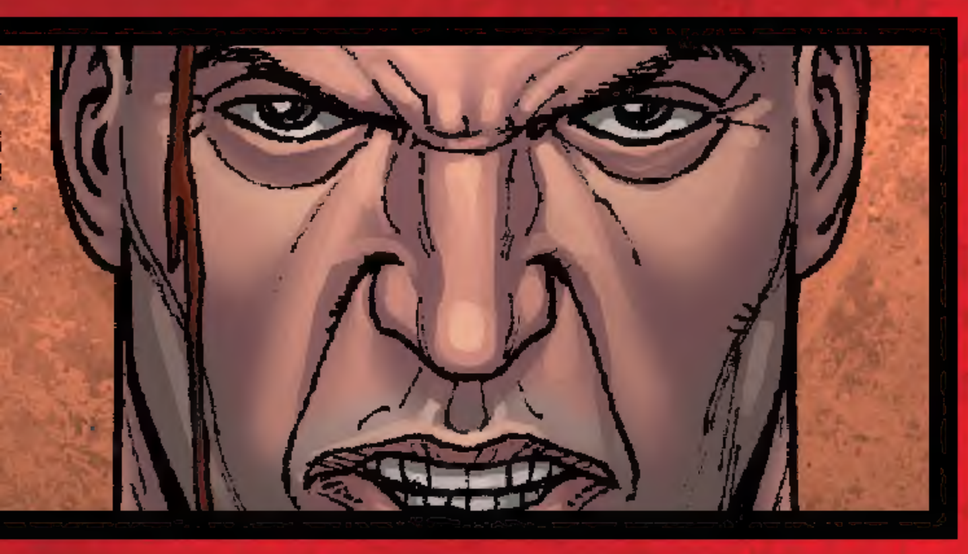
MARVEL NOW!

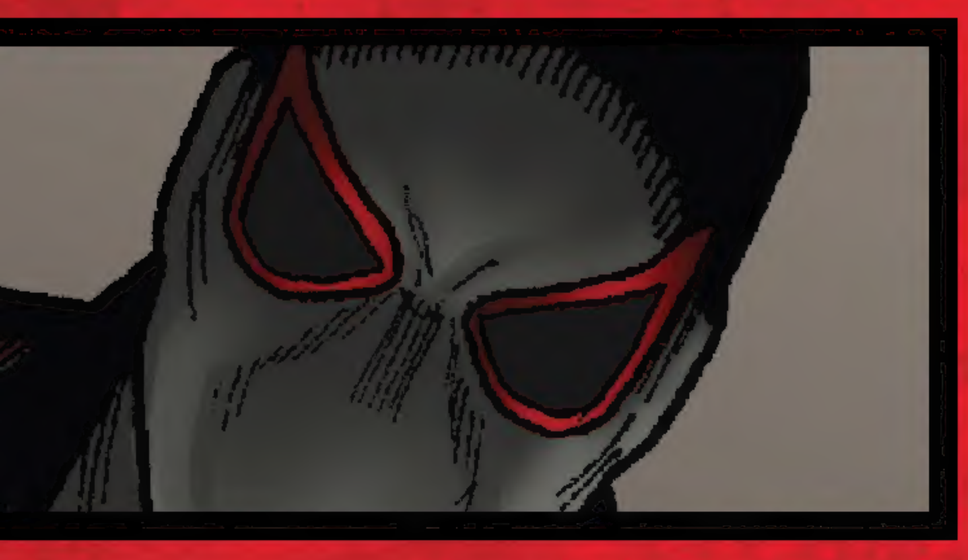
DILLON

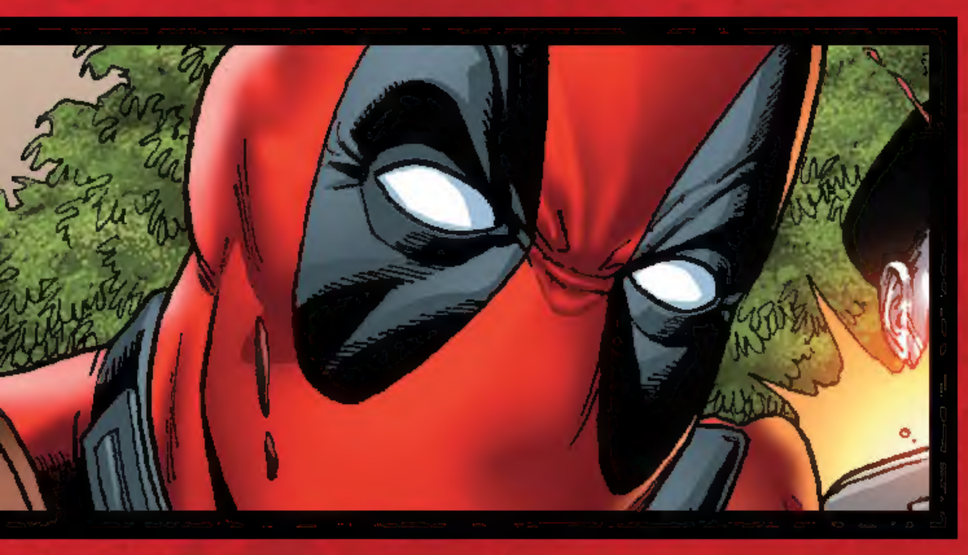
THUNDERBOLTS

VOLUME 1

NO QUARTER







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ONE

VICARRO IMPORTS LTD
499 BRUNT ST
BROOKLYN NY

SAY "CHEESE," FRANK...

GHZZT

AH, NICE.

I THINK THEY'RE REALLY GOING TO LIKE THAT.

SEND TO ALL

A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH LAST NAMES ENDING IN VOWELS ARE GOING TO BE SHOWING UP SOON.

VERY SOON.

IF I HAD TO GUESS, I'D SAY... *EIGHT MINUTES*, MAYBE?

NAH, PROBABLY LESS--YOU HAVE BEEN TAKING AN *AXE* TO THEIR VARIOUS *FAMILY TREES* FOR *QUITE SOME TIME*, AFTER ALL...

IN THE MEANTIME, WE SHOULD TALK.

I KNOW YOU.

SOMALIA:

YOU'RE--?

GENERAL THADDEUS ROSS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE.

RETIRED.

I HEARD YOU WERE DEAD, SIR.

IS THAT *ALL* YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT ME, SOLDIER?

OF COURSE NOT, SIR.

YOU'RE A *LEGEND.*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, SIR?

SHOPPING.

I'VE BEEN IN THE BUSINESS OF WAR FOR OVER A HALF A CENTURY. THAT'S ALL IT EVER WAS TO ME... BUSINESS.

IT WAS NEVER PERSONAL.

WITH ONE EXCEPTION.

HULK.

"YES.

"AND THAT'S WHY I FAILED.

"I LEARNED A LOT OF THINGS FROM THAT EXPERIENCE, THOUGH.

"THINGS THAT REMAIN WITH ME TO THIS DAY."

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I LEARNED WAS ABOUT *MYSELF*-- ABOUT HOW MY EMOTIONS AND MY ABILITIES, MY *TRAINING*, WERE... *SEPARATED.*

BY SOME SORT OF... *IDEOLOGICAL GULF.*

AND I DIDN'T *WANT* THEM UNITED.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BECOME...

...WELL, WHAT I'VE *BECOME.*

FRANCE:

WHAT...

...YOU THINK I DID?!

YES.

I'VE KEPT TABS ON YOU FOR YEARS, WADE.

DECADES.

OSCAR ZERO, WEAPON X...

YOU WERE A *PART* OF THAT?

NO.

BUT I KNOW ALL ABOUT THEM, AND I KNOW THAT, IN BOTH CASES...

...YOU VOLUNTEERED.

SO?!

SO.

I'M *LOOKING* FOR VOLUNTEERS.

A LONG TIME AGO, YOU MADE A DECISION. A *COMMITMENT*. AND YOU'VE *STUCK BY IT*.

I ADMIRE THAT.

HMM...

THEY ARE *REALLY STACKING UP* OUT THERE.

LOOK AT *THIS* KNUCKLEHEAD...

"...CAN'T EVEN FIND A *PARKING SPOT*."

I'M COUNTING... *AT LEAST* THREE HUNDRED SHOOTERS, ALL OF THEM ITCHING TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO PUT A BULLET *RIGHT BETWEEN YOUR EYES*.

NAH.

THEY'LL TORTURE ME FIRST.

SOME OF 'EM.

ARE THEY ANY *GOOD* AT THAT?

HM.

HOW 'BOUT THAT.

"THEY'VE STARTED *CARPOOLING.*"

WON'T BE LONG, THEN-- THEY'LL GROUP UP, GET BRAVE, AN' COME AT ME WITH EVERYTHING THEY GOT.

SO YOU SHOULD PROBABLY HURRY UP AN' TELL ME WHAT THE HELL THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

AFGHANISTAN:

<DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND ME?>

<I TOLD YOU TO STATE YOUR BUSINESS.>

<I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT.>

<THE SHEIK HAS NOT YET CONCLUDED HIS DEALINGS WITH A...>

<...PRIOR APPOINTMENT.>

<HEH.>

<MY APPOINTMENT IS NOT WITH THE SHEIK.>

CHAK

HNN... HNN...

THOKK

AR

YOU SPOKE OF AN OFFER...?

A PARTNERSHIP.

YES.

I DON'T LIKE MY BARGAINING POSITION.

HEH...

"...YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE IT A LOT *LESS* IN ABOUT A *MINUTE.*"

WHY ME?

YOU'RE TRAINED, PROVEN...

"HIGHLY MOTIVATED..."

WHY. ME?

BECAUSE YOU UNDERSTAND.

"YOU KNOW...

"BETTER THAN ANYONE...

"...THAT THE INFECTION CANNOT BE CURED.

"IT HAS TO BE CUT OUT."

BY THOSE WHO *CAN.*

EXACTLY WHAT YOU *EXPECTED* ME TO SAY, RIGHT?

NO NEED TO ANSWER.

YEARS AGO, THE FBI APPROACHED US AND ASKED IF WE'D PASS ON ALL OF THE *DATA* THAT THEY'D COMPILED ON YOU TO OUR *ANALYSTS*--THE *NSA, CAA, ITA,* ETCETERA. IT MADE *SENSE* THAT THEY'D COME TO THE D.O.D., SINCE NONE OF THOSE AGENCIES *TALK* TO EACH OTHER BUT THEY *ALL* TALK--AND *LISTEN*--TO *US.*

THE FBI WANTED TO BE ABLE TO ANTICIPATE YOUR ACTIONS SO THAT THEY COULD... *ARREST* YOU. WE SAID WE'D *HELP* THEM.

WE LIED.

THAT'S NOT TO SAY WE DIDN'T *ANALYZE THEIR DATA*-- WE *DID*, JUST NOT WITH THE INTENT OF *ANTICIPATING YOUR ACTIONS.*

WHAT *WE* WANTED WAS TO *EMULATE* THEM.

A LOT OF *GOOD MEN* ARE ALIVE TODAY BECAUSE OF YOU, CASTLE.

AND A LOT OF *BAD* MEN ARE *NOT.*

"SPEAKING OF BAD MEN...

"...WE ARE NOW *SECONDS AWAY* FROM OVER *FOUR HUNDRED* OF THEM LIGHTING THIS PLACE UP LIKE *TIMES SQUARE.*"

TIME TO MAKE ANOTHER *DECISION.*

DRAINAGE SYSTEM, INSTALLED TO PROTECT ALL THE CARGO STORED IN THESE PLACES FROM GETTING FLOOD-DAMAGED DURING HURRICANES.

IT'S A TIGHT SQUEEZE, BUT YOU'LL FIT.

THERE'S A MOB OUT THERE, CASTLE. ARMED TO THE TEETH.

AND IT'S GETTING BIGGER BY THE SECOND.

YOU MAY WANT TO KILL THEM ALL, BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS...

...YOU DON'T POSSESS THE REQUISITE FIREPOWER.

I DO NOW.

ENLISTED

TWO

MADRIPOOR; FOUR MONTHS AGO:

SO... ARE YOU *LOST?*

OR DO YOU NOT WANT TO BE *FOUND?*

RELAX, OJIICHAN... I ASK YOU THIS BECAUSE *EVERYONE* COMING TO MADRIPOOR IS EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER.

I AM ONLY WANTING TO MAKE CONVERSATION.

THEN GO MAKE IT WITH *THAT* FELLA.

MEN

LOOKS LIKE HE COULD USE IT.

OH, I HAVE BUT HIS STORY IS SO SAD... *MUCH* TOO SAD FOR ME.

HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN--ALSO, HIS GRANDCHILDREN-- *ALL* DEAD. ONLY HE WAS SPARED, AS HE WAS ON FISHING BOAT.

EN

HOW'D IT HAPPEN?

I AM NOT CERTAIN...THE LANGUAGE OF KATA JAYA IS *VERY* DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

YOU KNOW *KATA JAYA?*

HMM?

OH... YEAH.

AH! YOU SEE, WE ARE MAKING CONVERSATION! IT IS GOOD, YES?

NOW YOU TELL ME--ARE YOU LOST, OR DO YOU NOT WANT TO BE FOUND?

I DON'T KNOW.

MEN

"MAYBE...

BAR

HARBOR BAR

HARBOR BAR

"...BOTH."

NEW YORK CITY; THREE MONTHS AGO:

MM-HMM...AND DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW THERE'S MORE SEISMIC ACTIVITY IN THAT AREA THAN ANYWHERE ELSE ON THE *PLANET?*

OF COURSE I DO. THAT'S EXACTLY WHY THAT LOCATION WAS CHOSEN.

WELL, *THAT'S* CONVENIENT...

IT WAS *VERY* CONVENIENT, ACTUALLY--WITH MADRIPOOR LESS THAN EIGHTY MILES AWAY, THEY HAD READY ACCESS TO PORTS THROUGH WHICH THEY COULD RECEIVE OR TRAFFIC ANYTHING THEY NEEDED, FREE FROM RESTRICTIONS OR OVERSIGHT OF ANY KIND.

YEAH, I WAS *WAITING* FOR THAT--WOULDN'T BE A PROPER *CONSPIRACY* UNLESS *MADRIPOOR* WAS INVOLVED.

MADRIPOOR *WASN'T* INVOLVED. IT WAS SIMPLY NEARBY AND AVAILABLE.

AND AS I SAID EARLIER, I HAVE NO INTEREST IN EXPOSING A CONSPIRACY.

NO, YOU WANT THE WORLD TO KNOW THAT A *NUCLEAR BOMB--*

GAMMA-POWERED WEAPON.

EXCUSE ME--A *GAMMA-POWERED WEAPON* WAS DETONATED ON...*KATA JAYA*, A TINY ISLAND LOCATED OFF THE COAST OF SINGAPORE THAT *NO ONE'S EVER HEARD OF*, AT THE DIRECTION OF AN INSANE *DICTATOR* WHOM NO ONE'S EVER HEARD OF, RESULTING IN THE DEATHS OF...?

APPROXIMATELY SIX HUNDRED CIVILIANS, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

AND YOU *KNOW* THIS BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN COMMUNICATING WITH GUERILLA FORCES *OPERATING* ON THIS ISLAND.

I'M FIRING WHOEVER PUT THIS CALL THROUGH

AND YOU CAN PROVE EXACTLY NONE OF THIS VIA DOCUMENTATION, PHOTOS, VIDEO FOOTAGE OR, REALLY, *EVIDENCE OF ANY KIND.* DO I HAVE ALL OF THAT CORRECT?

NO.

NO?

SO--YOU *DON'T* WANT TO EXPOSE A GLOBAL CONSPIRACY INVOLVING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND YOU *DON'T* WANT TO INFORM THE PUBLIC AT LARGE OF A MADMAN'S *CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY.*

EVERYONE ALREADY KNOWS THAT THESE THINGS HAPPEN EVERY DAY. THIS IS NOT "*NEWS.*"

I'VE BEEN A REPORTER, WORKING FOR THE LARGEST NEWS AGENCIES ON THE *PLANET* FOR OVER *TWENTY-FIVE YEARS*...AND *YOU'RE* TELLING *ME* WHAT *IS* AND *ISN'T NEWS?!*

SHUT UP. THIS ISN'T ABOUT *YOU.*

IT'S ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT.*

"NO LONGER WILL LARGE-SCALE AGGRESSION BE *IGNORED*, OR *HIDDEN*, OR *CONDONED*-- IT WILL BE MET *IN KIND*...AND WITH *OVERWHELMING FORCE.*

"WE WILL STRIKE WITHOUT *MERCY*, WITHOUT FEAR OF *REPRISAL*, WITHOUT CONSIDERATION FOR *POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE* OR *STATURE.*

"WE WILL STRIKE AS LIGHTNING STRIKES THE EARTH."

<HAVE I MADE MY POSITION CLEAR?>

9MM

WEAPONIZED

KATA JAYA; NOW:

<PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT, WHILE WE *SINCERELY APPRECIATE* YOUR OFFER OF *ASSISTANCE*, OUR DEALINGS WITH MERCENARIES IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN... *DISASTROUS.*>*

<OF COURSE-- YOUR ENEMY HAS ALL THE MONEY. WHATEVER YOU CAN SPEND, HE CAN SPEND *MORE.*>

* TRANSLATED FROM KATA JAYAN.

<I'M NOT A MERCENARY.>

<I *CAN'T* BE BOUGHT.>

<THAT... *ALSO* MAKES US APPREHENSIVE.>

<YOU MAKE IT SOUND AS THOUGH WE HAVE NO *CHOICE* IN THIS MATTER.>

<YOU DON'T.>

<AND HOW IS THIS ANY DIFFERENT FROM THE DICTATORSHIP UNDER WHICH WE *ALREADY* LIVE?>

"<ARE WE NOT SIMPLY EXCHANGING *ONE* TYRANT...>"

"<...FOR ANOTHER, *LARGER* TYRANT?>"

<GENERAL AWA'S REGIME WILL BE REDUCED TO ASHES.>

<IN THAT, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.>

<WHAT ARISES *FROM* THOSE ASHES, HOWEVER, IS *ENTIRELY* YOUR CHOICE.>

<ALL OF AWA'S FORCES, BY YOU, ALONE, IN ONLY TWO DAYS?>

<HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?>

PLANNING.

"<AND I NEVER SAID I WAS ALONE.>"

ELSEWHERE IN KATA JAYA...

<YOU ARE ALL GUILTY OF CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT TREASON AGAINST OUR EXALTED RULER, SUPREME GENERAL AWA!>

<NO-- NO!>

<NAME YOUR FELLOW CONSPIRATORS NOW!>

<WE...ARE NOT TRAITORS!>

<THERE IS NO LONGER A *QUESTION* OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE.>

<THERE IS *ONLY* A QUESTION...>

<...OF *PUNISHMENT*.>

<SHOW YOURSELF, COWARD!>

<NOW!>

THUNK

HHHHSSSSSSSSSSS!

AAAAIIEEEEEEEE--!

HH-H--!

<OPEN FIRE ON THE HUT! THEY CANNOT BE SAVED!

I AGREE.

KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM KHOOMM

KHOOMM

GAMMA CELL DEPLETED

I WAS EXPECTING *AK'S, PARANGS...* THESE GUYS CAME PACKING *SERIOUS ORDNANCE.*

CHAK

YEAH.

GAMMA-POWERED PROJECTILE WEAPONS?! NOBODY HAS THIS STUFF--IT'S BANNED *WORLDWIDE.*

WHERE THE HELL'D *THEY* GET IT?

WHERE'S *EVERYTHING* BAD COME FROM?

MADRIPOOR;

TWO WEEKS AGO:

"LOOK ON MY WORKS, YE MIGHTY, AND DESPAIR."

WHAT THE #$&% DOES *THAT* MEAN?

YOU KEEP FRETTING WITH THAT NEW CHESTPLATE LIKE A SCHOOLBOY TUGGING AT HIS TIE. IS IT *UNCOMFORTABLE?*

SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.

IT'S IMPREGNATED WITH *GAMMA RADIATION*--SUPPOSED TO STOP ANYTHING SHORT OF A *DEPLETED URANIUM ROUND*. BUT FOR ALL I KNOW...

...ALL IT'S GONNA DO IS TURN ME INTO A BIG RED *FREAK.*

OH, NO, HE *DIDN'T--!*

POSSIBLE, I SUPPOSE...AFTER ALL, THE PROJECT WAS DECOMMISSIONED BEFORE IT WENT TO FIELD TESTING.

I ASSURE YOU, THOUGH, THAT *IT WILL KEEP YOU IN ONE PIECE*--THAT'S THE IMPORTANT PART.

AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THERE'S NO *MEDIC* ATTACHED TO THIS PARTICULAR UNIT.

ANY *OTHER* CRAZY, GAMMA-POWERED STUFF YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON?

SOME, YES...

WELL, IF EVERYONE *ELSE* IS GONNA BE IN RED AND BLACK...

...I MIGHT AS WELL FALL INTO COMPLIANCE.

BROWN-NOSER.

UNIFORMS SERVE A PURPOSE, YOU LITTLE $%&#%#.

THEY LET THE *DUMBER* ONES IN THE SQUAD KNOW WHICH PEOPLE *NOT* TO SHOOT.

ENOUGH.

"DEADPOOL. ELEKTRA.

"YOU'RE UP."

THE TUNNEL LEADING TO THE DICTATOR'S PALACE SHOULD BE OVER *THERE*, HIDDEN BEHIND THOSE BARRELS.

PROVIDED OUR INTEL IS CORRECT--

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYIN' THIS, BUT... STOP TAKING YOUR CLOTHES OFF.

WE GOTTA GO LOUD.

AIM FOR THE SOFT SPOTS.

TOO MANY!

TOO MANY FOR WHAT?!

FOR PRETTY LADIES WHO DON'T HAVE UNSTOPPABLE HEALING FACTORS.

<HOLD YOUR FIRE.>

<WE WILL TAKE IT FROM HERE.>

UH... WASN'T THIS WATER DEEPER ON OUR WAY IN?

<SURRENDER OR BE FIRED UPON!>

WHAT THE %&#$ IS HE SAYING?!

WHAT THE %&# DO YOU *THINK* HE'S SAYING?

OHMYGOD... DEADPOOL?!

HERE, ON OUR STUPID, CRAPPY ISLAND?! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WE'RE HUGE FANS!

W-WILL YOU SIGN OUR GUNS...?

HEH... SURE.

YOU GUYS JUST PASS 'EM OVER HERE AND I'LL GIVE 'EM THE OL' JOHN HANCO--

"SIR, IF WE CONTINUE TO BE IN THE DARK ABOUT OUR ENEMY'S OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES...

"...WE WILL FAIL."

KATA JAYA; NOW:

I AGREE.

DON'T CALL ME "SIR."

SIR, THIS IS BULL--

~HSSS!

DO NOT.

CALL ME "SIR."

KEEPIN' US IN THE DARK... WHAT'RE YOU HIDING?

PUT 'IM DOWN, ROSS.

OR...?

IF YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR OPTIONS...

...YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT THE WRONG GUY.

THIS IS A VOLUNTEER OUTFIT--YOU'RE FREE TO LEAVE WHENEVER YOU WANT.

BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE ARE CERTAIN MISSION DETAILS THAT I CANNOT AND *WILL* NOT TELL YOU.

FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.

THAT BEING SAID, YOU'LL HAVE THE INFORMATION YOU NEED AS SOON AS *I* HAVE IT.

YOU SHOULD'VE HAD IT BEFORE WE--!

IT'S TAKEN LONGER THAN I ANTICIPATED.

"MY INTEL SOURCE IS A BIT OUT OF PRACTICE.

"BUT DON'T WORRY.

"I'VE TAKEN THE NECESSARY STEPS TO...*ACCELERATE* THINGS."

STERNS, SAMUEL

THREE

MADRIPOOR:

WHAT DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* DOING HERE?

LIVIN' THE DREAM, SAME AS ALWAYS.

NOW HOW 'BOUT YOU TELL *ME*--

I'M NOT YET SATISFIED WITH YOUR ANSWER.

UHH... OKAY.

HMM.

I NOTICED YOU LOOKIN' AT THAT RED SHIPPING CONTAINER BEFORE WE SHIPPED OFF TO *KATA JAYA*. THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHIN' COOL TO *PLAY* WITH IN THERE, ALL RIGHT?

DID YOU LOOK INSIDE THE *GREEN* SHIPPING CONTAINER?

IT'S MY TURN TO ASK A QUESTION.

NO.

IT ISN'T.

BUT WHEN IT *IS* YOUR TURN, YOU MAY ASK *TWO* QUESTIONS.

FINE.

I TRIED. I COULDN'T GET IT OPEN.

THAT'S SURPRISING.

WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

IT MEANS I WOULD'VE EXPECTED HER TO OPEN IT *FOR* YOU.

WHAT IS YOUR *SECOND* QUESTION?

"HER"? WHO--?

HOLD ON...*SECOND* QUESTION?!

WHICH OF THOSE QUESTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO ANSWER?
NEITHER.
ANSWER THIS ONE, INSTEAD:
DID THE U.S. AIR FORCE *REALLY* COMMISSION SOMETHING CALLED A "*GAY BOMB*" IN THE MID-NINETIES?
HK
UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

KATA JAYA:

SHOOT THE MONKEY.

WE WOULD LIKE...TO SHOOT *TARGET*. TARGET IS *BETTER*.

SHOOT THE *TARGET* THEN.

...WHAT TARGET IS YOU SAYING?

WE...*UNDERSTAND* WHAT YOU SAY. WE ARE NOT *CHILDREN*. WE ARE NOT...*UNKNOWING OF VIOLENCE*. BUT PLEASE...

TO KILL A CREATURE OF... *INNOCENCE*...

KRAK

GRRAAHHRRLL!

HHRREEEEE--!

KHAKK--

SHE'S SQUAD LEADER.

TARGET PRACTICE OVER. YOU CAN'T SPARE THE AMMO.

FORM UP, MOVE OUT.

...W-WHERE ARE WE GOING?

KHOOMM

TO GET MORE AMMO.

"WOW. WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED BY THAT ANSWER?"

CYNICISM, I SUSPECT. I ADMIT TO BEING *COMPLETELY* SURPRISED BY THAT *QUESTION*, HOWEVER.

YOU WERE EXPECTING ME TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT *HIM*, RIGHT?

YES.

EH, I FIGURED YOU WERE GONNA EXPLAIN IT *ANYWAY*, SO...Y'KNOW, WHY WASTE MY SHOT?

HE'S AN ASSET, *ESSENTIAL* TO OUR VICTORY IN KATA JAYA.

HE'S *THE LEADER.*

HE *WAS* THE LEADER. UNTIL I SAPPED HIS POWERS.

YOU CAN *DO* THAT?

SOMETIMES, YES.

BUT NOW YOU'RE GIVIN' THOSE POWERS *BACK* TO HIM.

NO. I'M NOT.

SOOO...THIS GLOWY GAMMA THINGY *ISN'T* JUICIN' UP HIS BRAIN WITH THE SAME WHAMMY THAT MAKES YOU ALL RED AND RAGEY?

IT IS, BUT ON AN EXTREMELY LIMITED AND TEMPORARY BASIS.

SO... YES.

YES.

THERE'S SOMETHIN' IN THIS GUY'S HEAD THAT WE *NEED?*

YES. I'M SIMPLY SUPPLYING HIM WITH THE POWER NEEDED TO ACCESS IT.

ON AN EXTREMELY LIMITED AND TEMPORARY BASIS.

YES.

MEANING, OF COURSE...

MEANING THAT ONCE HE TELLS ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW, I'M GOING TO KILL HIM.

HM.

YEAH, I'M COOL WITH THAT.

I'M EVER SO RELIEVED.

YOU DO REALIZE THAT PUNISHER'S GONNA PUT A BULLET HOLE RIGHT ABOUT *HERE* AS SOON AS HE FINDS OUT, DON'T YOU?

I'LL DEAL WITH THAT IF AND WHEN I HAVE TO.

DEAL?

WITH PUNISHER?

"GOOD LUCK WITH THAT."

AIM FOR THE BODY. JUST NEED TO DROP 'EM FOR NOW.

ONCE EVERYTHING CALMS DOWN, PUT A BULLET THROUGH THE HEAD OF ANY OF 'EM STILL MOVIN'.

SPREAD OUT ALONG THIS TREE LINE. ***FIRE FROM COVER ONLY.*** DON'T WANT 'EM TO KNOW OUR NUMBERS.

DONE RIGHT, WE'LL LEAVE HERE WITH A WORKABLE ARSENAL.

H-HOW DO WE...DO THIS ***RIGHT?***

KILL 'EM ALL.

NO OTHER WAY TO DO IT.

...YOU ***LEAVING?!***

THEY'RE GONNA IMMEDIATELY CALL TO THE BARRACKS FOR REINFORCEMENTS. THE BARRACKS ARE ELEVEN MINUTES AWAY. THAT'S THE ***BAD*** NEWS.

GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE'S ONLY ONE ROAD BETWEEN HERE AN' THERE. ***BETTER*** NEWS IS, THAT ROAD HAS A ***BRIDGE.***

I'M GONNA GET RID OF IT.

WE... ***NEED*** YOU. TO ***HELP*** US.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I DO.

"SOMEBODY ELSE IS HANDLIN' THAT."

<I NEED WEAPONS AND ARMOR FOR THESE NEW CONSCRIPTS.>*

<WHERE IS YOUR *AUTHORIZATION?*>

*TRANSLATED FROM KATA JAYAN.

<RIGHT HERE.>

<OPEN THE GATE!>

<MY CHILDREN...WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF ME?>

<BE CONTENT THAT THEY WILL LIVE TO THINK *ANYTHING*, SO LONG AS YOU SERVE IN AWA'S ARMY.>

<WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, I WAS BEING FOOLISH... *SELFISH*.>

<I AM ASHAMED.>

<DO NOT LET IT TROUBLE YOU, FRIEND...WE ARE *ALL* HERE NOT BY *CHOICE*, BUT BECAUSE WE *HAVE* NO OTHER CHOICE.>

YOU DO NOW.

KOOOOM

<NOW!>

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CH-CHOOMM CHOOMM

CH-CHOOMM

CH-CHOOMM

AAAIEEE!!!

CH-CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CH-CHOOMM

<GET TO COVER! I WILL PROTECT YOU!>

<WAIT! PUNISHER SAID-->

<DIE, TRAITOROUS FILTH!>

ZZAK!

CHOOMM

CHOOOM-CHOOM-CHOOOMM

SHLLAKT

<THERE! WHERE THAT ONE WAS KILLED!>

<CONCENTRATE YOUR FIRE THERE!>

TAKE THEM--

CHOOMM CHOOMM CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CH'-CHOOMM

CHOOMM

<NICE SHOOTING.>

<THAT'S THE WHOLE BASE SECURED.>

<LOAD UP THE TRUCK.>

"IT'S TIME TO GO."

BUT I THOUGHT YOU HAD TO...?

HOLD UP--IS YOUR WILDLY IRRESPONSIBLE AND INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS SCIENCE EXPERIMENT NOT *WORKING*...?

IT'S WORKING, BUT... SLOWLY.

STILL A *DUMMY*, HUH?

HIS PHYSIOLOGY REMAINS PERMANENTLY ALTERED FROM HIS ORIGINAL EXPOSURE TO GAMMA RADIATION-- ***INCREASING HIS INTELLIGENCE WILL BE THE EASY PART.*** WHAT I'M DOING NOW IS JUST AS IMPORTANT, BUT MUCH...***TRICKIER.***

I'M PURGING HIS SHORT-TERM MEMORY.

WHY?!

OH, WAIT--I GET IT.

SO HE WON'T REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE THE GUY WHO TURNED HIM INTO A DUMMY!

YES. THAT... AND A FEW OTHER THINGS.

LIKE, THAT HE'S *TOTALLY EVIL* AN' *INSANE?*

YEAH, I DUNNO, BIG RED...

...I THINK MAYBE SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST *BORN* LIKE THAT.

SOOO...IF WE'RE GONNA GO, WE SHOULD PROBABLY, UH, GO...

WE'RE TAKING HIM WITH US.

DUDE, I DON'T WANNA PACK ALL THIS--

WE'RE NOT TAKING *EVERYTHING*...

BLIP

...JUST *HIM.*

H...

HUHH...?

"DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?"

I KNOW ENOUGH.

NO...NO, I DON'T THINK YOU *DO.*

BECAUSE--I THINK--IF YOU *DID* KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT ME, *YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.*

I ALSO THINK THAT YOUR GREEK ANCESTORS WOULD BE... *VERY* DISAPPOINTED WITH YOU.

AS FAR AS *TROJAN HORSES* GO, MS. NATCHIOS, YOURS WAS *EMBARRASSINGLY OBVIOUS.*

"WHAT ABOUT ELEKTRA? IS SHE--?"

"CAPTURED."

"GOOD."

AT LEAST *THAT'S* GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN...

H-WWHURRRK--!

SO, WHAT IS IT YOU'RE HOPIN' TO GET *OUTTA* THIS GUY?

'CAUSE I'M ASSUMIN' *THAT'S* NOT IT...

INFORMATION.

DUH, *YEAH*...BUT WHAT *KINDA* INF--

INFORMATION ABOUT HIS BROTHER.

...WHO'S HIS *BROTHER?!*

MY NAME IS *PHILLIP*, BY THE WAY...*DR. PHILLIP STERNS.*

YOU CAN CALL ME *MADMAN*, THOUGH--I DON'T MIND.

YOU'VE INVENTORIED EVERYTHING?

<YES.>

MY APOLOGIES-- YES.

IT'S OKAY-- I'VE BEEN STUDYING THE LANGUAGE.

LET ME SEE.

THIS'LL WORK.

IN THEORY.

ARE WE NOW BRINGING ATTACK TO AWA'S PALACE?

NO.

WE'LL DISTRIBUTE THIS AMONG OUR CELLS, CONTINUE WITH THE HARRYING TACTICS. WE WANT AWA TO SPREAD HIS FORCES THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND.

WHY DO WE--?

FRONTAL ASSAULT'S NO GOOD FOR US--IT'D PROBABLY RESULT IN A SIEGE SCENARIO, WHICH GIVES HIM TOO MUCH TIME TO CALL IN FAVORS FROM OFFSHORE FORCES.

PLUS, IF WE GROUP UP IT GIVES AWA AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE ANOTHER BOMB.

WHAT YOU MEAN, "BOMB"?

A GAMMA BOMB.

LIKE THE ONE HE USED TO DESTROY THE VILLAGE.

THAT... WAS NOT BOMB.

...WHAT WAS IT, THEN?

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW.

TWO THINGS, ACTUALLY.

WHOO...?

THAT'S...

YEAH. IT IS.

BUT CHECK IT OUT--THIS *COLLAR* THING? IT'S...WELL, I DUNNO *WHAT* IT IS BUT IT KEEPS HIM--

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?

DUDE, *RELAX!*

BIG HEAD'S, LIKE, A TOTAL DUMMY NOW, OKAY?

HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE *IS.*

BLAMM

UHH...

OKAY, WASN'T ME WHO GOT SHOT... WHICH MEANS--

YOU DIDN'T *DESERVE* IT.

YET.

HA!
TOLD YA!

FOUR

KATA JAYA, NOW:

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE?!

SIR.

EXPLAIN THIS.

EXPLAIN HIM.

I DON'T HAVE TIME.

THAT'S IT-- WE SPRING ELEKTRA...

...AND WE'RE DONE HERE.

"DONE"...?

HEY, WAIT!

ROSS IS OUT OF HIS MIND. HE'S DONE NOTHING BUT LIE TO US FROM THE START.

BRINGING IN *THE LEADER*...?

HE SAID HE COULD CONTROL HIM!

HE DOESN'T CONTROL *ME*.

WE KNEW THIS WOULD NOT BE SUCCESS...

...WE AGREE TO MERCENARY ASSISTANCE BEFORE AND *SAME* UNFORTUNATE RESULT.

IS *GOOD* YOU LEAVE KATA JAYA.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE FROM BEGINNING.

DAMN RIGHT, LADY.

WHAT OTHER MERCENARY?

SOON--
AT AWA'S PALACE:

HERE HE COMES...

THIS PLAN IS JUST ABOUT *DUMB* ENOUGH TO BE *MINE.*

IT *IS* YOURS.

OH, *YEAH...*

QUITE BRAZEN OF YOU TO CONFRONT ME *HEAD-ON* LIKE THIS...

...I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD BE *INSULTED* OR *FLATTERED.*

SUCK MY #^&# #&$%, YOU &#$-EATING, &$#&-SNIFFING *%&#%$*&#!!!

I'D SAY HE'S SURE, NOW.

MASSIVE RESPONSE

RAAAARRR!

ONE YEAR AGO:

...DO I KNOW YOU?

IT'S ME, SAMUEL...IT'S PHILIP.

YOUR BROTHER.

MAY I COME IN?

OH...YEAH! SURE...

I'M, UH...SORRY, PHILIP, I...

NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE, SAM--YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. I UNDERSTAND.

I, UH... HEH...

I DON'T...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF *ANYTHING*, ANYMORE...AND MY MEMORY'S PRETTY... *SCRAMBLED*...

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE KIDS?

NOT REALLY...NO.

I REMEMBER THAT, *AFTER EVERY HALLOWEEN*, WE'D BOTH HAVE THESE HUGE BAGS OF CANDY. I'D EAT MINE AS FAST AS I COULD BUT *YOU*...YOU *SAVED* YOURS.

I DID?

YES, YOU DID... YOU DIVIDED IT UP INTO *TINY AMOUNTS* AND HID IT *ALL OVER THE PLACE.*

WHY'D I DO *THAT?*

BECAUSE YOU KNEW I'D TRY TO TAKE IT.

I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO *FIND* IT ALL, *AFTER* YOU HID IT. IF THERE WAS A MAP, *I* NEVER FOUND IT...

I, UH... I ACTUALLY KINDA *REMEMBER* THAT.

YOU DO?

YEAH...

HEH.

THERE, UH... THERE *WAS* NO MAP. THERE WAS THIS...*CODE* THAT I MADE UP. I, UH... I USED TO USE IT A *LOT*, I THINK.

THAT'S *IMPRESSIVE*, SAM... YOU COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN, WHAT, *SEVEN YEARS OLD?*

THEN AGAIN, YOU ALWAYS *WERE* EXTREMELY CLEVER WHEN IT CAME TO THINGS LIKE THAT...

DO YOU REMEMBER THAT CODE, SAM?

NOW:

<SUPREME GENERAL AWA!>*

<I...I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS BUT YOU ARE...NOT *ALLOWED* TO-->

<WHY ARE YOU NOT JOINING THE OTHERS? MY PALACE IS UNDER ATTACK.>

* TRANSLATED FROM KATA JAYAN.

<WE...WE WERE ORDERED TO REMAIN AT OUR-->

<YOU WERE GIVEN ORDERS? AND YOU THINK THESE ORDERS--*HIS* ORDERS- ARE OF GREATER IMPORTANCE THAN *MINE*?>

<HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHO I AM?>

<BECAUSE I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN WHO *YOU* ARE, *DEMAK TENGKU*.>

<I REMEMBER IN GREAT DETAIL YOUR PLACE OF BIRTH, AND YOUR *FAMILY*...>

<...AS I DO YOURS, *SABTU*.>

<HE...HE WILL *KILL* US, SUPREME LEADER.>

<PERHAPS.>

<BUT IS IT NOT A CERTAINTY THAT *I* WILL KILL ALL OF *THEM*?>

DECADES AGO.

JALAK AWA...?

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA:

THE DEAN WILL SEE YOU NOW.

H-HELLO, DEAN--

THESE MEN ARE WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

THEY WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

THE GOVERNMENT...?

MR. AWA, SOME FOLKS JUST AREN'T CUT OUT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

YOU'RE ONE OF 'EM.

WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS YOUR *OTHER* OPTIONS.

SIT.

YOU DON'T WANNA BE HERE-- YOUR LACK OF *ATTENDANCE* PROVES *THAT*. AND YOUR *GRADES*...?

I AM WORKING... *VERY* HARD...TO IMPROVE MY--

CUT THE B.S., PAL--YOUR *FATHER'S* THE ONE WHO WANTS YOU TO HAVE A WESTERN EDUCATION, NOT *YOU*. HE FORCED YOU TO COME HERE AN', *SINCE* THEN, YOU'VE BEEN DOIN' EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO GET KICKED OUT.

YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T JUST *GO HOME*, RIGHT? THAT YOUR FATHER'D SEE YOU *BANISHED* BEFORE HE'D LET THAT HAPPEN? BEFORE HE'D BRING THAT KINDA *SHAME* UPON HIMSELF?

I...I DO NOT WANT--

SINCE WHEN HAS ANYBODY CARED ABOUT WHAT *YOU* WANT?

LET THE YOUNG MAN SPEAK.

WHAT *DO* YOU WANT, JALAK?

DO YOU WANT TO RULE *KATA JAYA*, AS YOUR FATHER DOES?

NAVAL BASE PEARL HARBOR, FIVE WEEKS LATER:

KATA JAYA IS *OURS*, VICE ADMIRAL.

NO...

I BEG YOUR PARDON, SIR?

...IT *ISN'T.*

KATA JAYA IS A *SOVEREIGN NATION.*

KATA JAYA BELONGS TO THE *PEOPLE*, AND THE PEOPLE'S *GOVERNMENT*...

...OF *KATA JAYA.*

U.S.S.R.

CHINA

AS DOES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS ACTIONS.

UNDERSTOOD, VICE ADMIRAL. I SHOULD'VE BEEN MORE--

THAT BEING SAID...

...THE NEWLY INSTALLED *SUPREME LEADER GENERAL* OF KATA JAYA *IS* OURS.

PUT HIM TO WORK.

"HE'S ALREADY BEGUN, SIR..."

<FASTER! FASTER!>

"...WITH GUSTO."

<FASTER, YOU DOGS!>

GENERAL AWA!

A WORD?

WE'VE BEEN GETTING REPORTS OF SOME *DISCONTENT* BREWING IN YOUR OPERATION HERE...IS THAT SOMETHING THE C.I.A. NEEDS TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT?

NOT AT ALL.

MY FATHER WAS A VERY POPULAR RULER. I AM SURE THAT ANY DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE PEOPLE IS SIMPLY MISPLACED GRIEF FROM HIS...*UNTIMELY PASSING.*

IT WILL SUBSIDE, AND QUICKLY.

GOOD TO HEAR. REMEMBER THAT IT'S IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST TO KEEP ALL OF THIS AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE.

I WILL KEEP IT ALL *VERY* QUIET, I ASSURE YOU.

THE EXCAVATION FOR THE *PARTICLE ACCELERATOR* WAS COMPLETED *YESTERDAY*, CORRECT?

YES...?

THEN WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE THEM *DIGGING?*

I AM AFRAID YOUR QUESTION CONFUSES ME...DID YOU NOT JUST SAY IT WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO MAINTAIN SECRECY?

THE HUNDREDS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHOSE LABOR HAS *CONTRIBUTED* TO MY SUCCESS HERE...

"...I MUST HAVE SOMEWHERE TO PUT THEM WHEN THEY ARE *FINISHED*, YES?"

NOW:

FINALLY, WE MEET.

YOU ARE WORKING FOR THE *AMERICANS?* YOU, AND YOUR FRIENDS *OUTSIDE?* YOU HAVE COME TO KILL ME BECAUSE I AM A...

HOW IS IT SAID...?

AH.

A "*LOOSE END*"?

GENERAL ROSS SENT US.

I *REMEMBER* A MAN NAMED ROSS... A *PILOT.* HE RAN AERIAL SECURITY FOR THE *CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY SHIPMENTS* OUT OF *MADRIPOOR.*

THE *PARTICLE ACCELERATOR COMPONENTS*, THE LABORATORY EQUIPMENT FOR *THE UNDERGROUND FACILITY*...HE ENSURED ITS SAFE PASSAGE HERE TO KATA JAYA.

HE WAS YOUNG, AS I RECALL...

HE IS A *GENERAL* NOW, YOU SAY? I AM SURPRISED HE HAS NOT YET *RETIRED*... PERHAPS A *GUILTY CONSCIENCE* KEEPS HIM FROM DOING SO?

PERHAPS *THAT* IS WHY YOU AND YOUR *FRIENDS* ARE HERE?

IF I HAVE FRIENDS OUTSIDE, AND YOU'RE *AWARE* OF THEM, IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE CAUSING A *DISTRACTION.*

"SO THAT *OTHER* FRIENDS CAN GET *INSIDE.*"

YOU TELL ME THAT I AM RUNNING OUT OF TIME, BUT THIS IS SOMETHING I ALREADY KNOW.

ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT *YOU*, PERHAPS, DO *NOT* KNOW.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT *FRIENDS.*

"*AMERICA* WAS MY FRIEND.

"BUT AMERICA *ABANDONED* ME.

"*LEFT* ME TO BE EATEN BY *DOGS*.

"SO I REACHED OUT INTO THE DARKNESS TO FIND A *NEW* FRIEND.

"A FRIEND AMONG MY *ENEMIES*. A MERCENARY THEY HAD HIRED TO *KILL* ME, BUT WHO WAS EASILY TURNED AGAINST THEM WITH THE PROMISE OF GREATER REWARD.

"BLINDED BY DESPERATION, I COULD NOT SEE THAT *ONE* BETRAYAL FORETOLD *ANOTHER*."

FRIENDS... HAVE TAKEN *EVERYTHING* FROM ME.

AND NOW I HAVE NOTHING.

"THIS IS HOW IT WILL END FOR YOU, AS WELL."

ELEKTRA!

BLAM

HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GONNA DO THIS?

'TIL WE GET CONFIRMATION FROM VENOM THAT HE'S GOT ELEKTRA...

"WE KILL THIS SON OF A BITCH..."

...OR WE DIE.

DUDE.

THAT'S A LAND MINE.

"DUDE."

I KNOW.

I SURRENDER!

FRANKLY, THIS WHOLE AFFAIR HAS MOVED *COMPLETELY* OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE.

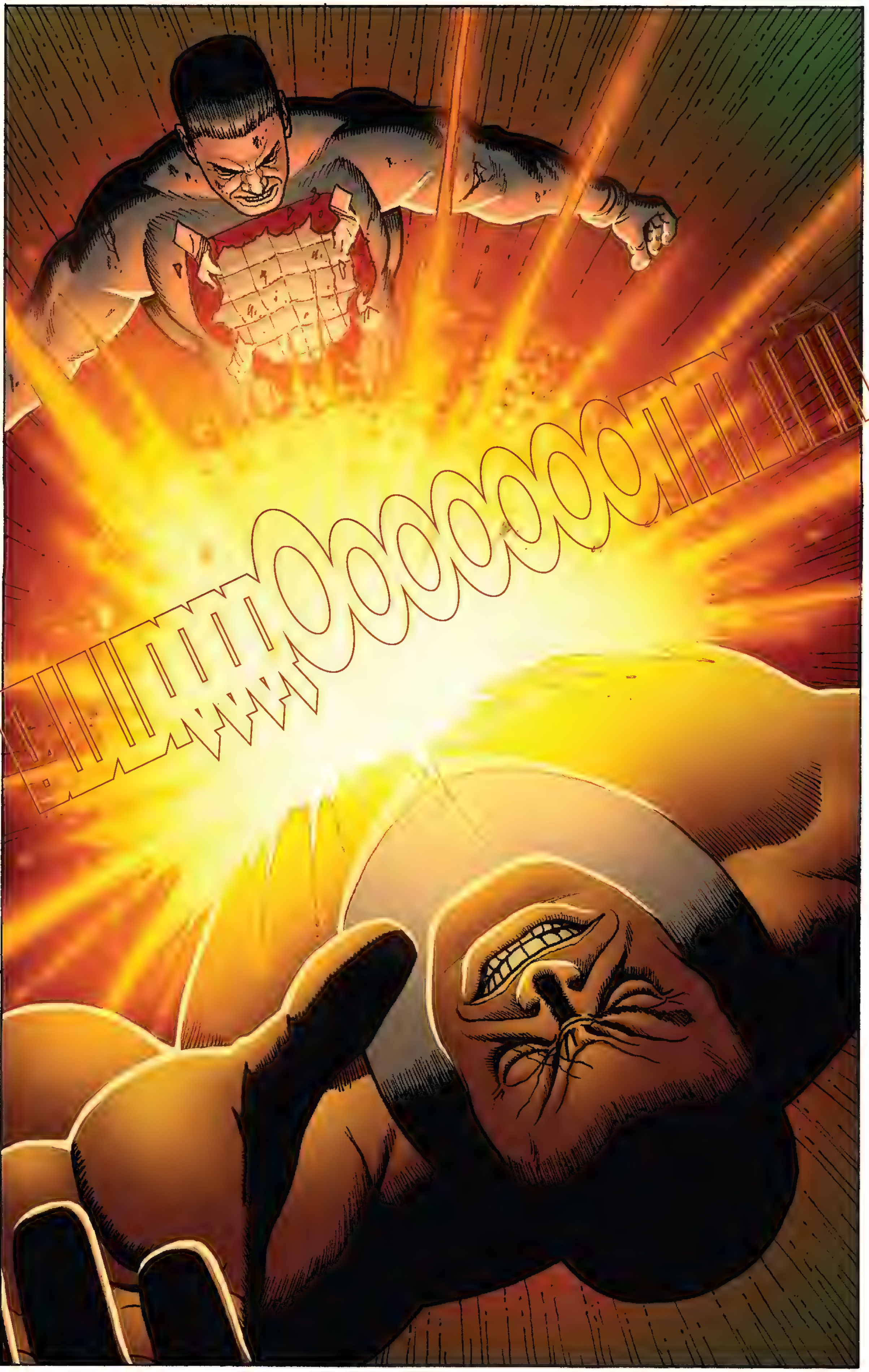
WHAT'RE YOU...?

OH, ARE YOU LOOKIN' FOR *HIM?*

HA! DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD--

GHK—

FRONT. TOWARD. ENEMY.

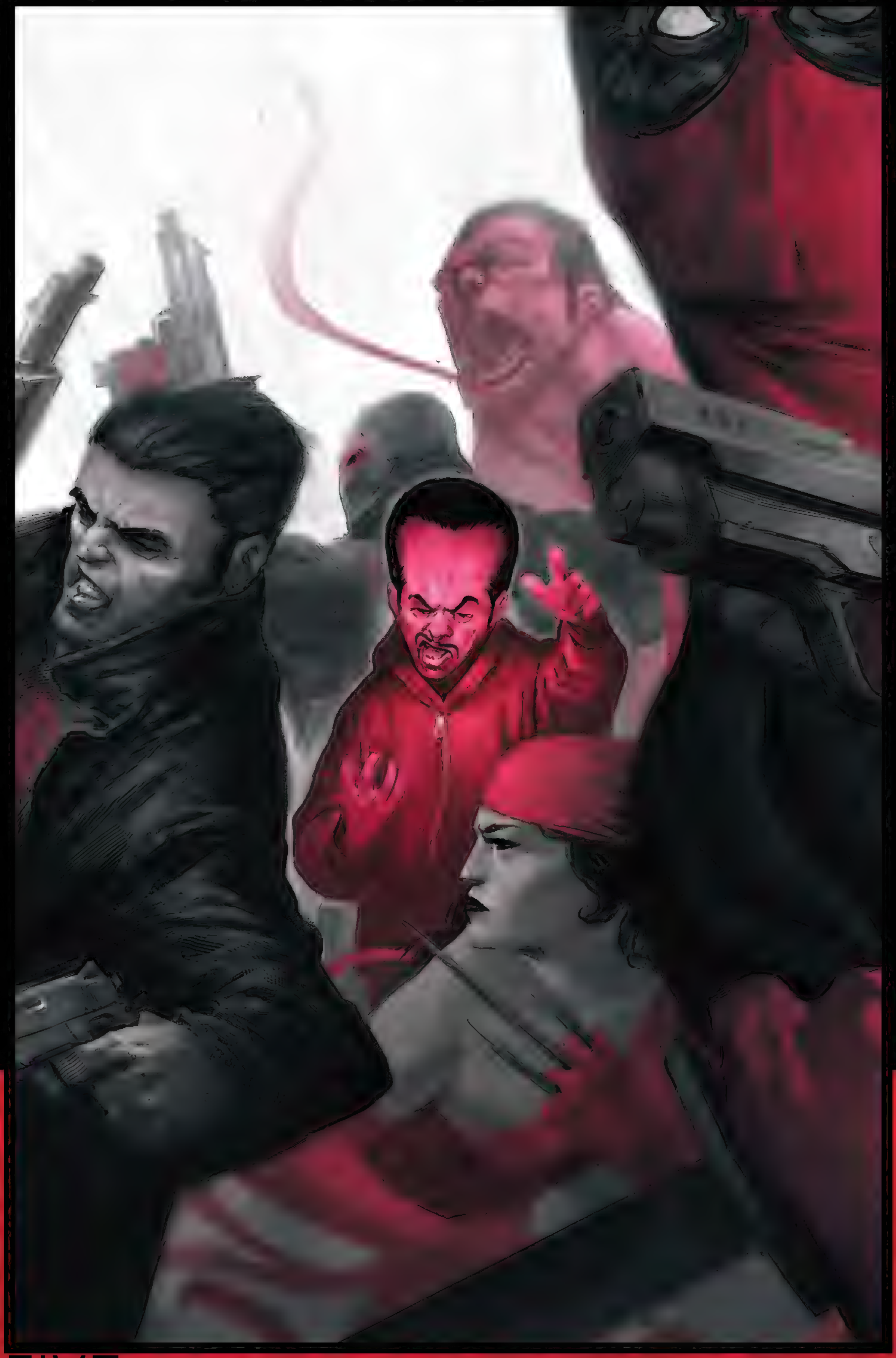


ELEKTRA? ARE...ARE YOU--?

WHERE'S ROSS?

"FORGET ROSS. THIS WHOLE OPERATION HAS GONE COMPLETELY TO HELL...

"...AND I HOPE IT TAKES HIM DOWN WITH IT."



FIVE

<GENERAL AWA IS DEAD!>*

* TRANSLATED FROM KATA JAYAN.

<DEAD...?>

<OUR SPY IN THE PALACE *SAYS* IT IS SO! *HE SAYS HE SAW THE BODY WITH HIS OWN EYES!*>

<WHAT OF THE *MONSTER* HE KEEPS? THE ONE WHO *BETRAYED* US--THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF "*MADMAN.*"?>

<THEY DO NOT *KNOW* WHERE HE IS! THEY THINK HE HAS *DESERTED*!>

<READY OUR FORCES.>

<TELL THEM WE ARE STORMING THE PALACE.>

<TELL THEM WE ARE TAKING BACK KATA JAYA!>

COUP

W...
WATER...

WATER...

I'M TRYING...I DON'T...

I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE...

NOR DO YOU KNOW *WHAT* YOU ARE.

I KNOW...

SOMETHING...

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

YES...

"...YOU'RE AN ANGEL."

WAKE UP.

WE NEED TO MOVE.

HRGK--!

BROKEN RIBS?

MM.

JUST RIBS BROKEN? NOT YOUR STERNUM?

MM.

HOW'S YOUR BREATHING?

H...

HALF...

YOU CAN'T RUN.

AND WE CAN'T HIDE.

<THE REBELS ARE COMING.>

<WE...WE WILL *SURRENDER! GENERAL AWA IS DEAD!* THERE IS NO *NEED* FOR--!>

SLAP

<THAT AWA IS DEAD ONLY MEANS THAT *WE MUST DIE IN HIS PLACE.*>

<BUT I WAS NEVER *TRULY* LOYAL TO AWA... NOT IN MY *HEART...*>

<NONE OF US WERE, YOU FOOL... THAT WE SERVED UNDER THREAT OF DEATH TO OUR FAMILIES MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. *WE SERVED, NONETHELESS.*>

<WE PLEDGED OUR LIVES TO A HEARTLESS *DEMON* WHO, FOR **50 YEARS**, RAINED DEATH AND DESTRUCTION DOWN UPON OUR PEOPLE. THIS LAND...>

<...OUR *HOMELAND*, IS STAINED WITH THE BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT. IT CAN BE CLEANSED *ONLY* WITH THE BLOOD OF THE WICKED.>

<*NOTHING* HAS CHANGED, DEMAK. WE WILL DIE...>

<...SO OUR CHILDREN MAY LIVE.>

GLOOM

<YOUR WISH HAS BEEN GRANTED.>

<COWARD.>

<COME.>

<OUR MEN HAVE LOCATED TWO OF THE REBELS' *MERCENARIES*-- WE WILL CAPTURE THEM AND TRADE THEM *BACK* TO THE REBELS *IN EXCHANGE FOR OUR LIVES.*>

<WE WILL RETURN TO OUR *OLD* LIVES, *AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED.*>

<I SEE NOW THAT SABTU SPOKE THE TRUTH.>

<WE...*CANNOT* RETURN.>

<YOU ARE DELUSIONAL.>

<IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.>

WHERE'S...

...VENOM?

WE SPLIT UP.

I FOUND YOU BY ACCIDENT.

LUCKY YOU...

LUCKY YOU.

WHERE'S DEADPOOL?

DON'T KNOW...

...DON'T CARE.

WANNA SEE ME DO AN IMPRESSION?

WHAT IS...?

AROUND YOUR NECK... *THAT* IS...

ARE *YOU*--?

MADMAN?

NOPE.

THIS IS MADMAN--OR, *SHOULD* I SAY, "*HEEERE'S* THE BEAST!"

SO...WHO AM I?

UH... HELLO? *YUKON CORNELIUS?*

HOW'RE YOU GUYS NOT *GETTING* THIS...?

I AM *MERCY.*

I FIND THOSE IN NEED, THOSE LOST, AND I GRANT THEM THE GIFT OF FREEDOM.

I AM THE LAST REFUGE OF THE LONELY, THE FORGOTTEN AND THE DOOMED.

I AM HOPE...FOR THE HOPELESS.

OH.

CAN YOU HELP HIM?

AS MUCH AS I WOULD LOVE TO...

...NO.

I CANNOT.

THERE IS A FORCE WITHIN HIM THAT I AM POWERLESS TO OVERCOME. I AM...*FASCINATED* BY IT. YOU HAVE THIS SAME FORCE WITHIN *YOU*, SAMUEL...AND I WANT YOU TO HELP ME *UNDERSTAND* IT.

I...I CAN'T HELP YOU...I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

YOU WILL, SAMUEL. SOON, YOU WILL KNOW *EVERYTHING.*

...HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

CHCHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHZZOOMM

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHOOMM

CHCHOOMM

CHCHOOMM

<KAWA TOLD MY SQUADMATE ABOUT AN *UNDERGROUND LAB.*>

FFUMP

<TELL ME WHERE IT IS.>

FASCINATING.

IS IT INSTINCT THAT COMPELS YOU TO HELP THIS MAN?

I... I DON'T KNOW.

HE'S HURT.

YES, HE IS.

HIS PAIN, COURSES THROUGH ME, LEAVING ME *DEBILITATED.*

I CANNOT STOP IT.

YOU'RE HURT, TOO?

YES.

WILL YOU HELP ME?

I...I *WANT* TO...BUT *HOW?*

YOU ASKED ME HOW IT IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU COULD KNOW *EVERYTHING.*

IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE... SOMETHING I COULD DO...

IT IS SOMETHING *ONLY* YOU CAN DO.

THOUGH YOU CANNOT REMEMBER BECAUSE YOUR MIND HAS BEEN...DESECRATED BY LESSER BEINGS, *YOU HAVE FORESEEN MY ARRIVAL.* YOU HAVE *PREPARED* FOR IT.

YOU KNEW THAT THE KNOWLEDGE I SEEK IS TOO PRECIOUS TO BE TRUSTED TO MORTALITY, AND SO YOU *HID* IT--A PIECE HERE, A PIECE THERE, WHEREVER AND IN WHATEVER FORM IT *COULD* BE HIDDEN.

WAIT... *WHY* DID I...?

BECAUSE YOU KNEW I'D TRY TO TAKE IT.

OTHERS HAVE TRIED TO *ACCESS* THIS KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY CANNOT FULLY UNDERSTAND IT BECAUSE THEY ARE BURDENED BY SOMETHING THAT YOU, SIMPLY, ARE NOT.

...WHAT'S THAT?

LIMITS.

"YOU ARE UNIQUE. WHAT YOUR MIND CAN COMPREHEND--WHAT *ONLY* YOUR MIND HAS THE POWER TO CONTAIN--

"--IS BEYOND WHAT ANY OTHER SINGLE MORTAL MAN CAN GRASP."

WHAT...

THE #@*%...?

<I TRIED TO TURN IT OFF...>

<WHAT... IS THIS?>

<WHEN I HEARD THAT WE ARE TO BE OVERRUN, I TRIED TO TURN IT OFF...I TRIED TO SAVE THEM. BUT IT IS TOO LATE.>

<THE MACHINE IS THE ONLY THING NOW KEEPING THEM ALIIIEE--!>

<WHAT IS THIS?!>

<IT...TH-THEY...>

<...ARE A BRAIN...>

I'VE PUT A LOTTA THOUGHT INTO THIS.

NOT SURE WHY BUT, I DUNNO...MAYBE IT'S 'CAUSE I JUST STARTED A...*RELATIONSHIP?* WITH SOMEBODY I FEEL A REAL *CONNECTION* TO, Y'KNOW? AN', LIKE, *WHEN THAT HAPPENS*, YOU START *THINKIN'* ABOUT THINGS THAT'RE...*OTHER* THAN WHAT JUST *YOU* THINK ABOUT?

Y'KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN'? ANYWAY...

"...*THERE I AM* AN' THERE *THIS* GUY IS, BUT HE'S *UNCONSCIOUS* 'CAUSE FRANK BLASTED HIM WITH A *LAND MINE**. *BONUS*, HE'S ALL SHRUNK DOWN TO *HUMAN-SIZED* 'CAUSE I GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GUYS LIKE HIM *GET* KNOCKED OUT.

"SO *NOW* I'M THINKIN'...WELL, *YOU* KNOW WHAT I'M THINKIN', I'M THINKIN' I SHOULD *WASTE* THIS DUMMY. BUT THEN I START THINKIN' THAT'LL PROBABLY JUST *WAKE HIM UP*--AN' BY '*HIM*', I MEAN THE FREAKY-BIG *HULK*-MONSTER. I'M FRIGGIN' *STYMIED*."

*LAST ISSUE.

AN' HERE'S THE OTHER THING THAT'S GOIN' ON--THOSE THOUGHTS I WAS TELLIN' YOU ABOUT? THEY'RE GETTIN' INTO MY HEAD, TOO...AN' THEY'RE TELLIN' ME THAT I SHOULDN'T WASTE THIS DUMMY 'CAUSE THAT'D BE--GET THIS--*SELFISH.*

YOU'RE THE ONES NEEDIN' CLOSURE ON THIS WHOLE "*GENOCIDAL DICTATORSHIP*" THING, NOT *ME*. BUT HOW'S A SMOOTH BROTHER LIKE MYSELF GONNA MAKE THAT *HAPPEN?* I'LL *TELL* YA HOW:

I DO *MORE* THINKING, AN' MY BRAIN STARTS MAKIN' MORE IDEAS BASED ON THE FACTUAL *DATA* THAT I'M SEEIN'--*TO WIT*, WHAT UP WITH THE GOOFY-ASS *COLLAR?*

IS IT NOT *REALLY EFFIN' SIMILAR* TO WHAT *ROSS* WAS USIN' TO CONTROL THE POWERS OF A CERTAIN *EVIL DIPWAD* OF *SIMILAR ORIGIN?** AN' IS IT NOT *PROBABLE* THAT IT'S BEIN' USED THE SAME WAY BY *THIS* EVIL DIPWAD TO CONTROL HIS *OWN* POWERS?

SO I SNATCHED IT.

*HE MEANS LEADER, IN ISSUE #2.

BOOM. *DE-POWERED.*

YOURS TO DO WITH AS YOU PLEASE. NOW, YOU *COULD* JUST SHOOT HIM BUT I'M THINKIN' THAT WHAT *YOU* GUYS NEED--AN' WHAT'S REALLY GONNA LET THE *HEALING* BEGIN--IS SOME *OLD-SKOOL JUSTICE.*

STONING, MAYBE? YOU COULD DO A *LUAU* KINDA THING EVEN, WITH EVERYBODY ON THE ISLAND BRINGIN' A *ROCK?* OR MAYBE GO HIGHBROW WITH IT AN' HAVE A *TRIAL*...Y'KNOW, WITH *TESTIMONIES* AN' STUFF?

AN' THEN AFTERWARD, *HANG HIS GUILTY ASS FROM A PINEAPPLE TREE!*

PINEAPPLE DOES NOT GROW ON TREE.

WHO *GIVES* A #$&! WHERE PINEAPPLES GROW?

YOU WANT BLOOD, YOU GOT IT.

HAVE FUN.

ME?

"I'M GONNA GO FIND A CERTAIN SPECIAL LADY AN' TELL HER ABOUT SOME *GROWTH* I'VE EXPERIENCED."

THAT'S THAT, THEN.

YEAH.

ALMOST.

KCHOOOMM

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN YOU STAY CONSCIOUS?

LONG ENOUGH.

"HATE TO DISAPPOINT YOU..."

...BUT HE'S COMING WITH ME.

INDEED I AM.

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER.

SIX

KATA JAYA.

NOW.

CAN YOU GO ON?

NOT A PROBLEM.

OH.

THERE YOU ARE.

FALLOUT

WHERE THE HELL...?

YOU.

RRG-K--!

I DESTROYED YOU!!!

AND THEN YOU RE-CREATED HIM.

I...?

LEADER'S HERE ON KATA JAYA BECAUSE YOU BROUGHT HIM HERE WITH YOU, THADDEUS.

FOR A *PURPOSE.*

A PURPOSE HE CANNOT SERVE IF *DEAD.*

MERCY.

SO FLATTERED YOU REMEMBER ME.

I WASN'T SURE YOU WOULD, AS IT APPEARED YOU'D DISINTEGRATED YOUR ***OWN*** MIND AS THOROUGHLY AS YOU HAVE THAT OF POOR ***SAMUEL***, HERE.

...HUH?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I BRING ***DEATH*** FOR THOSE WHO SEEK ***OBLIVION***, NOT ***ANSWERS*** FOR THOSE WHO SEEK ***KNOWLEDGE***.

THADDEUS, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTS SO BADLY FOR HIM TO ***LEARN***...

...WHY DON'T ***YOU*** ANSWER HIM?

I HAVE OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING MY PARTICULAR ATTENTION.

ELSEWHERE.

MADMAN.

HAND HIM OVER.

YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS.

THE KATA JAYAN PEOPLES ARMY DEMANDS JUSTICE! HE IS TO BE TRIED AND EXECUTED--

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WANT-- THAT YOU *DESERVE* REVENGE FOR WHAT HE'S DONE TO YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE.

BUT HE'S DONE...*MORE* THAN THAT.

YOU HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT I'VE DONE, DO YOU?

NO *WONDER* YOU NEED ME ALIVE-- WHAT OTHER HOPE WOULD *HAVE* OF UNDERSTANDING WHAT I'VE SET INTO MOTION?

SPEAKING OF WHICH...I TAKE IT YOU'VE FOUND MY LITTLE *"MINING OPERATION"* IN THE LAB?

HOW ARE THE *KIDS*, BY THE WAY? SUCH OPEN MINDS, SUCH INSATIABLE HUNGER FOR KNOWLEDGE...

TOO BAD THEIR LITTLE HEADS *POP* SO QUICKLY...

NO MORE TALKING!

ALL YOUR TALKING SAYS TO US IS IT IS *YOU* WHO DOES NOT WANT TO DO THIS.

WE ARE COMMITTED.

WE ARE READY TO FIGHT YOU FOR HIM.

WE ARE *READY* TO DIE.

YES.

YOU ARE.

AND I AM HERE FOR YOU.

WHERE'S *VENOM?*

DUNNO.

YOU'RE *ALONE?*

YEAH.

I GUESS I AM.

THE OP WAS TO SPRING ELEKTRA AN' DUST OFF, *MISSION SCRUBBED.*

VENOM ACCOMPLISHED THE *FIRST* OBJECTIVE, NO REASON TO THINK HE WOULDN'T MOVE ON TO THE *SECOND.*

I THINK HE WENT LOOKING FOR THE *LAB.*

AWA TOLD ME ABOUT AN *UNDERGROUND LAB...* SAID THAT *ROSS* WAS SOMEHOW INVOLVED.

IT GOT VENOM'S ATTENTION.

WHERE IS IT?

UNDERGROUND.

DUH.

WHO'S GOT COMMS?

WELL...?

BLOWN TO HELL IN THE FIREFIGHT WITH MADMAN.

YOU?

NO--PRISONER, REMEMBER?

DEADPOOL?

CHOK

NOPE.

FRESH OUT.

WE SPLIT UP, THEN.

"I'M DOWN WITH THAT..."

"YOU'RE A MONSTER, AND YOU DESERVE TO DIE."

BUT... I DON'T...

THE FLYING WOMAN SAID YOU WANTED ME TO *LEARN!* WHY--?

THAT'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO LEARN.

OH.

IS THAT... *ALL?*

NO.

FOLLOW ME.

I'LL ELABORATE.

YOU WERE *BORN* STUPID.

"YOU GREW UP AND GOT A JOB AS A JANITOR AT A CHEMICAL PLANT. AT THE PLANT, YOU WERE ACCIDENTALLY EXPOSED TO A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF *GAMMA RADIATION.*

"*UNEXPLAINABLY,* THIS RESULTED IN YOU DEVELOPING A *SUPER-HUMAN INTELLECT.*

"BASED SOLELY UPON *RAW BRAIN POWER,* YOU WERE EASILY THE SMARTEST MAN ON THE PLANET."

GAMMA EXPOSURE HAS BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE... *DRAMATIC EFFECTS* UPON HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY. CELLS *EXPAND*, YET BECOME MORE *DENSE*. BUT THERE ARE *LIMITS*.

WITH THE DAWN OF THE *CYBER AGE*, YOUR BRAIN HIT THOSE LIMITS ALMOST *IMMEDIATELY*.

"THOUGH YOUR INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY WAS ESSENTIALLY *BOUNDLESS*, YOUR *PHYSICAL* ABILITY TO *CONTAIN* KNOWLEDGE WAS *NOT*.

"THE *PROBLEM*, HOWEVER, ALSO PROVIDED THE *SOLUTION*:

"*REMOTE DATA STORAGE.*"

YOU UPLOADED YOUR BRAIN TO THE INTERNET.

BILLIONS OF TINY, ENCODED DATA PACKETS CONTAINING YOUR KNOWLEDGE ARE HIDDEN *THROUGHOUT CYBERSPACE*, ACCESSIBLE ONLY BY YOU.

OR, BY ANYONE ELSE WHO KNOWS THE CODE TO *UNLOCK* THEM.

MY BROTHER... *PHILIP*...

"HE ASKED ME ABOUT A CODE BUT I DIDN'T *KNOW*...

"...I COULDN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT *WAS*."

DO YOU REMEMBER *NOW?*

YOU'VE BEEN SHADOWING ME SINCE THE THREE OF US SPLIT UP.

#$%&...

SOMETHIN' ON YOUR MIND?

YEAH.

TUMORS.

NASTY, GROSS LITTLE THINGS THAT GRAB ON TO SOMETHING THAT'S ALIVE AN' TURN IT INTO SOMETHING THAT'S NOT. THEY TAKE EVERYTHING AN' THEY GIVE BACK NOTHING.

LIKE A BLACK HOLE.

LIKE *YOU.*

YOU GOT THE WRONG IDEA.

I'VE GOT ALL KINDS OF IDEAS.

I'M A REALLY INVENTIVE GUY.

YOU LIKE ELEKTRA. YOU DON'T LIKE ME. I GET IT.

I DON'T CARE.

THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

WHAT *I'M* WONDERING IS, WHY SHOULDN'T I JUST *SOLVE* THAT PROBLEM *RIGHT HERE AN' NOW?*

CH-CHAK

YOU MIGHT KILL ME FIRST, BUT I #&%*&#$ GUARANTEE I'LL KILL YOU LAST.

TAKE IT TO THE BANK, FRANK.

LAB'S THAT WAY.

FOUND IT TWO DAYS AGO.

I DON'T SLEEP MUCH.

WHAT HAS YOUR BROTHER BEEN DOING?

I'M...NOT SURE...

BE SURE.

HE'S...*SIFTING?* I'M NOT SURE THAT'S THE RIGHT WORD...

HAS HE FIGURED OUT THE *CODE?*

NO.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE *DID* FIGURE OUT HOW TO ISOLATE AND, UM... *QUANTIFY* THE *RAW DATA.* THAT'S WHAT *THEY'RE* FOR.

CONVERTING... OR, UH, *AMALGAMATING...* THE CONCRETE BUT SINGULAR *UNITS* INTO ABSTRACT, HUMAN *THOUGHTS.*

DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

DOES HE *KNOW* WHAT *YOU KNEW.*

SOME OF IT, MAYBE...? HE SEEMS TO BE LOOKING FOR ONE THING *IN PARTICULAR,* THOUGH.

THE SECRETS OF GAMMA POWER.

HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?

THERE ARE THREE PARTICLE ACCELERATORS ON THE PLANET *SPECIFICALLY CALIBRATED FOR GAMMA RADIATION.*

ONLY *TWO* OF THEM, HOWEVER, ARE KNOWN--EVEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF...*CURRENT GOVERNMENT.*

"KATA JAYA IS HOME TO THE THIRD."

I...I KNOW I ASKED THIS *ALREADY*, BUT...

...HOW DO YOU *KNOW* THAT?

US AIR FORCE

BECAUSE HE HELPED BUILD IT.

MAKING IT *MY* *RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF.*

UH...YEAH, *YOURS*, MAYBE-- YOU TOLD *US* WE WERE HERE TO "*TAKE CARE OF*" A *DICTATOR!*

WHICH WE *DID*, BY THE WAY...

...AN' AS A BONUS, I EVEN TOOK OUT THAT DINGUS *MADMAN.*

AS YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE BY THE FINERY CURRENTLY BLINGIN' UP MY NECK JOINT.

...WHAT?!

THE *COLLAR!* THIS IS THE *COLLAR* HE HAD ON HIS *NECK!*

THE ONE THAT HE USES TO *TRANSFORM...?*

THAT COLLAR HAS *NOTHING TO DO* WITH MADMAN'S ABILITY TO TRANSFORM.

...WHAT?

...WHAT?

HRRAAAHRR!

KRR-RRRRRRRRROOOOOOMMMMMMMM

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD *KEEP* THESE SECRETS FROM ME?!

THAT YOU'RE *BETTER* THAN ME?! THAT I DON'T *DESERVE* WHAT *YOU HAVE*?!

THAT'S WHAT MY *BROTHER* THOUGHT!

BUT IT WAS *HE* WHO DIDN'T DESERVE IT!!!

PHILIP... STOP. PLEASE.

YOU--!

YOU'RE HERE TO *TAKE* IT FROM ME!

AGAIN!!!

NO, PHILIP.

I'M HERE TO *GIVE* IT TO YOU.

NO!

I CAN...

...I CAN SEE...

NNN... HNNGH...

YESSS...

I DON'T KNOW... *WHAT*, EXACTLY, HE WAS DOING, BUT I *DO* KNOW THAT HE WAS *MAKING* SOMETHING. SOMETHING THAT LEFT THE ISLAND THREE DAYS AGO. ON A BOAT. OR... A SHIP. A *SHIPPING VESSEL.*

I THINK WE NEED TO FIND IT. I THINK THAT, IF WE *DON'T*...

...I THINK MILLIONS MORE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO DIE.

THERE'S A *SUB.*

ELEKTRA AN' I SAW IT WHEN WE CAME TO THE ISLAND. WE CAN USE IT TO CHASE DOWN THE SHIPPING VESSEL. IT'S PRETTY EASY TO OPERATE--I DROVE IT TO *MADRIPOOR* THE OTHER DAY TO, UH...

WE'LL TAKE THE SUB.

ARE YOU... *SURE* ABOUT THAT?

"US? IN *CLOSE QUARTERS,* FOR AN *EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME?"*

"I'M DOWN WITH THAT..."

NEXT: RED MENACE

#1 VARIANT BY MIKE DEODATO & JIM CHARALAMPIDIS

#1 VARIANT BY SKOTTIE YOUNG

#1-5 COMBINED VARIANTS BY BILLY TAN & JIM CHARALAMPIDIS

#1 VARIANT BY BILLY TAN & JIM CHARALAMPIDIS

#2 VARIANT BY BILLY TAN & JIM CHARALAMPIDIS

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